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DE RUEHLM #0266 0681150
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FM AMEMBASSY COLOMBO
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 9541
INFO RUEHTH/AMEMBASSY ATHENS 0085
RUEHKA/AMEMBASSY DHAKA 1417
RUEHIL/AMEMBASSY ISLAMABAD 8412
RUEHKT/AMEMBASSY KATHMANDU 6637
RUEHLO/AMEMBASSY LONDON 4766
RUEHNE/AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI 2754
RUEHNY/AMEMBASSY OSLO 4739
RUEHKO/AMEMBASSY TOKYO 3839
RUEHCG/AMCONSUL CHENNAI 9055
RUEHBI/AMCONSUL MUMBAI 6389
RUEHON/AMCONSUL TORONTO 0939
RHHMUNA/HQ USPACOM HONOLULU HI
RUEHGV/USMISSION GENEVA 3289
RHEFDIA/DIA WASHINGTON DC
RHEHAAA/NATIONAL SECURITY COUNCIL WASHINGTON DC
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C O N F I D E N T I A L COLOMBO 000266

SIPDIS

DEPARTMENT FOR SCA/INS

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TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PREL](#) [PHUM](#) [PTER](#) [MARR](#) [EAID](#) [CE](#)

SUBJECT: SRI LANKA: PILLAIYAN'S TMVP HANDS IN SOME OF ITS WEAPONS

REF: A. COLOMBO 229

[1](#)B. 08 COLOMBO 1108

Classified By: Acting DCM Michael DeTar, for reasons 1.4(b,d).

[1](#)1. (SBU) On March 7, cadres loyal to Eastern Provincial Council Chief Minister Sivanesanathurai Chandrakanthan ("Pillaiyan") surrendered 150 weapons and 7,000 rounds of ammunition to government security forces in Batticaloa. Press reports characterized the ceremony as the "official disarming" of Pillaiyan's TMVP, a breakaway faction of the LTTE formerly known as the "Karuna group," and now allied with the government. It is likely that this represents only a portion of the TMVP's weapons, however. Pillaiyan explained the TMVP's decision by stating, "the only reason why we decided to carry arms was for our own safety. We said that we would disarm only if terrorism was eradicated. Today terrorism is in the last stages of being wiped out. Therefore, we have decided to lay down our arms and completely join the democratic mainstream."

[1](#)2. (U) The same day, Vinayagamoorthy Muralitharan ("Karuna Amman"), the former military commander of the TMVP and now a Member of Parliament, stated that his faction would not disarm until he and his cadres were full members of President Rajapaksa's Sri Lankan Freedom Party (SLFP). Karuna announced in early February his plans to leave the TMVP to join the President's party. Karuna's spokesman indicated that the group's members were forced to retain their weapons because of continued threats from other, unnamed sources.

[1](#)3. (C) COMMENT: Karuna's decision to join the SLFP has brought into the open the break between the former TMVP comrades-in-arms. Pillaiyan's move to turn in at least some of his fighters' weapons, presumably the result of substantial GSL pressure, is a welcome development. USAID plans to assist in demobilization efforts through rehabilitation programs, including some implemented by the International Organization for Migration (ref B). Efforts to provide employment abroad for a significant number of ex-cadres have faltered with the global economic downturn, however. For example, demand for construction workers has fallen off in the Middle East, and South Korea recently

announced it was no longer accepting foreign workers due to the decline in economic activity.
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